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**ACID SPILL ON CITY STREETS PENALIZED**

The prosecution of an industrial battery acid spill onto San Diego streets has concluded with a court-ordered injunction and \$67,985 in penalties and costs paid by the responsible company.

The spill occurred on July 25, 1996, when a Laidlaw Environmental Services truck was hauling 10,000 pounds of industrial batteries from a local aerospace company destined for recycling. Driving on Sassafras Street near India Street, the truck was heading toward the freeway when the one hundred-plus pound inadequately secured batteries moved inside the truck, causing sulfuric acid to leak out. According to reports, the corrosive acid then spilled out of the truck and onto the roadway.

According to Nick Vent, Hazardous Materials Specialist with the County Department of Environmental Health, the leakage of sulfuric acid onto the street posed a significant public health threat. Sulfuric acid is a contact corrosive, with the potential to damage eyes and skin if not properly handled. According to reports, the sulfuric acid softened the asphalt. This softening reportedly caused several vehicles to lose traction. Traffic on both India and Sassafras Streets was stopped until the emergency response crews neutralized the spilled acid and removed the batteries from the truck. No reports indicated that acid entered any waterway, and Laidlaw promptly responded to the spill and cooperated with the investigation.

The Complaint alleged that the defendant violated California's Hazardous Waste Control Act among other laws. In a stipulated final judgment filed August 26, 1998, in San Diego Superior Court, the defendant, without admitting any of the allegations in the Complaint, agreed to a permanent injunction in addition to paying penalties and costs.

This case was brought by City Attorney Casey Gwinn's Consumer and Environmental Protection Unit, with assistance from the San Diego Hazardous Waste Task Force.

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